Gregory the Great and Angelic Mediation: The Anglo-Saxon Crosses of the Derbyshire Peaks

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The figural carvings decorating the remains of the Anglo-Saxon stone crosses of the Derbyshire Peak District have attracted considerable interest since they first came to public attention in the mid-eighteenth century during the burgeoning of antiquarian interest in such monuments.[1] It was an interest that ensured the survival of what were, at the time, damaged shafts and fragments that had been abandoned in the churchyards of Bradbourne, Bakewell, and Eyam and used as building fabric in the churches and adjoining walls (Figs 24–29).[2] Today they stand as one of the most celebrated group of pre-Scandinavian monuments of Anglo-Saxon Mercia, generally recognized as the products of a common sculptural centre flourishing in the region in the late eighth and early ninth centuries.

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[1] For a full bibliography and conditions of the antiquarian history of this group of monuments, see the forthcoming volume of the *CASSS* on Derbyshire and Staffordshire by Jane Hawkes and Philip Sidebottom.

[2] A fragment of the cross-head, along with the shaft that incorporates the lower part of the cross-head, survives at Bakewell; at Bradbourne are the remains of the shaft and two pieces of a cross-head; at Eyam are the truncated remains of the shaft and cross-head. See T. E. Routh, 'Corpus of the pre-Conquest Carved Stones of Derbyshire', *DAJ*, 58 (1937), 1–46 (pp. 5–7, 18–20, 27–28), and John Moreland, 'George Forrest Browne, Early Medieval Sculpture and Nineteenth-Century Reformation Historiography', *JBAA*, 156 (2003), 150–66 (p. 154).

Figure 24 (above). Bakewell, Derbyshire: remains of cross-shaft and lower portion of cross-head: (a) west face, (b) east face, (c) south face, (d) north face. Photo: *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*, Ken Jukes.
Figure 25 (below). Bakewell, Derbyshire: fragment of cross-head. Figure with book. Photo: Jane Hawkes.

Figure 26 (above). Eyam, Derbyshire: remains of cross-shaft and cross-head: (a) west face, (b) east face, (c) south face, (d) north face. Photo: Jane Hawkes.
Figure 27 (below). Bradbourne, Derbyshire: remains of cross-shaft: (a) west face, (b) south face, (c) east face, (d) north face. Photo: Jane Hawkes.

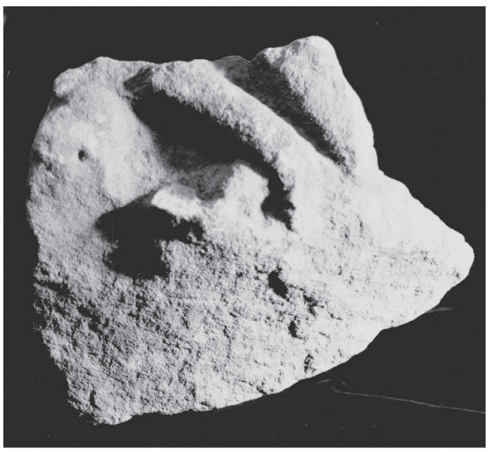

Figure 28 (above). Bradbourne, Derbyshire: fragment of cross-head: (a) angel with trumpet, (b) angel with rod. Photo: Jane Hawkes.
Figure 29 (below). Bradbourne, Derbyshire: fragment of cross-head. Head of figure with foliate rod. Photo: Jane Hawkes.

Indeed, much of the scholarly discussion of this group of sculptures has been devoted to highlighting these issues of production through focussing on the many stylistic and formal features that they share.[3] The interlace and plant-scroll patterns filling the shaft at Eyam have been noted as being closely parallelled at Bakewell (Figs 24b–d, 26a–d), while the remains of an archer preserved at the base of the Bakewell shaft, shooting an arrow through the plant-scroll above him, is an arrangement and association of motifs found elsewhere at Bradbourne (Figs 24b, 27a, c),[4] where a further point of comparison is the common use of a Crucifixion scene (Figs 24a, 27b). Bakewell also shares with Eyam the setting of a single male figure in the end of one cross-arm (Figs 24c, 26d) and a quatrilobe interlace knot in the spandrels of the cross-arms, an unusual detail repeated on the cross-arm preserved at Bradbourne. Again, this latter fragment shares with the Eyam cross-head depictions of angels with staffs and trumpets (Figs 26a–b, 28, 29), while the figural style that has been used, not just for the angels in these cross-heads, but also for the figures on the cross-arm fragment at Bakewell and the shafts of the crosses, is common to all three monuments. Overall, it is an extensive catalogue of motifs that clearly demonstrates the likelihood of a shared centre, and therefore date of production.

However, in focussing on such details not only have these discussions, like most studies of Anglo-Saxon sculpture, provided insight to the techniques and methods of production of this distinctive type of public art through identifying their common features, they have also served to distinguish the differences between them.[5] In doing this they have laid the groundwork for further work on the material — most notably, that which has been devoted to exploring the motives of those responsible for the design of the monuments and their individual iconographic programmes. Here, the work of Éamonn Ó Carragáin has been fundamental. His seminal 1978 paper on the liturgy of the early Church and the carved decoration of the crosses at Ruthwell (Dumfries.) and Bewcastle (Cu.)[6] opened

[3] See, for example, Rosemary Cramp, 'Schools of Mercian Sculpture', in *Mercian Studies*, ed. by Ann Dornier (Leicester, 1977), pp. 191–233.

[4] See related fragments at Wirksworth (Philip C. Sidebottom, 'Stone Crosses of the Peak and the "Sons of Eadwulf"', *DAJ*, 119 (1999), 206–19), and remains of a shaft from Sheffield with an archer set in the plant-scroll (William G. Collingwood, *Northumbrian Crosses of the Pre-Norman Age* (London, 1927), fig. 53).

[5] See Richard N. Bailey, 'Innocent from the Great Offence', in *Theorizing Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*, ed. by Catherine Karkov and Fred Orton (Morgantown, WV, 2003), pp. 93–103.

[6] Éamonn Ó Carragáin, 'Liturgical Innovations Associated with Pope Sergius and the Iconography of the Ruthwell and Bewcastle Crosses', in *Bede and Anglo-Saxon England: Papers in Honor*

up the manner in which these sculptures could be examined, iconographically. His approach situated the monuments within a specific cultural and intellectual context, and in so doing focussed on the figural rather than non-figural decoration, while at the same time calling attention to the possibility that the non-figural could be more than simply 'decorative' by emphasizing symbolic significances rather than issues of form and style.[7] More broadly speaking, Ó Carragáin's work has facilitated an approach that builds on the iconological methodology developed in art historical circles during the 1940s and 1950s, most notably in the work of Panofsky. His studies have enabled the application of this approach to art objects that are less explicitly related to specific documentation than are the works of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century artists through which the iconological methodology was most famously articulated.[8] Some three decades later it is perhaps not inappropriate to examine the Derbyshire sculptures in the light of Ó Carragáin's work by considering the liturgical and exegetical literature circulating in the Anglo-Saxon world of the eighth and early ninth centuries.[9]

Angelic Settings

Although the vagaries of survival mean that much of the detail of the figural sculptures originally decorating the Peak District sculptures has been lost, their extant iconographic programmes are distinct in their selection and arrangement. The

of the 1300th Anniversary of the Birth of Bede, Given at Cornell University in 1973 and 1974, ed. by Robert T. Farrell, British Archaeological Reports, 46 (Oxford, 1978), pp. 131–47.

[7] For full discussion, see Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems of the 'Dream of the Rood' Tradition* (London, 2005).

[8] Erwin Panofsky, *Iconography and Iconology: An Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art* (New York, 1955). Despite the common association of this methodology with such works, it was applied earlier in Anglo-Saxon sculptural studies: Franz Saxl, 'The Ruthwell Cross', *JWCI*, 6 (1943), 1–19; Meyer Schapiro, 'The Religious Meaning of the Ruthwell Cross', *Art B.*, 26 (1944), 232–45, and 'The Archer in the Bowman and the Bird on the Ruthwell Cross and Other Works: The Interpretation of Secular Themes in Early Medieval Religious Art', *Art B.*, 45 (1963), 351–55; a response to Ernst Kantorowicz, 'The Archer in the Ruthwell Cross', *Art B.*, 42 (1960), 57–59. For a summary, see Kellie Meyer, 'Bird, Beast or Fish? Problems of Identification and Interpretation of the Iconography Carved on the Tarbat Cross-Slabs', in *Able Minds and Practised Hands: Scotland's Early Medieval Sculpture in the 21st Century*, ed. by Sally Foster and Morag Cross (London, 2005), pp. 243–57.

[9] See Richard N. Bailey, *The Meaning of Mercian Sculpture*, Vaughan Papers, 34 (Leicester, 1990), for initial iconographic discussion of the monuments at Bakewell and Eyam.

cross at Eyam, which displays the best preserved of the carvings, depicts figural images on only one, broad face of the shaft (Fig. 26a), while all four faces of the cross-head are filled with figural work (Fig. 26a–b). At Bakewell, the figural predominates on, but is not limited to, the broad (west) face of the shaft, as figural motifs are incorporated into the plant-scroll on the east face (Fig. 24a–b). This is also the case at Bradbourne, but here the plant-scrolls fill both narrow faces of the shaft, and the two broad faces are filled with the worn remains of figural panels (Fig. 27), while the cross-head seems, as at Eyam, to have been given over to figural motifs (Figs 26, 28, 29).

Not only does the arrangement of the carved ornament vary across these three monuments, however, the selection of figural motifs also varies. The Bakewell and Bradbourne shafts display numerous panels that are predominantly iconic portrait-type images, but which also include the Crucifixion amongst them: at the base of Bradbourne and at the top of Bakewell (Figs 24a, 27b). The shaft at Eyam, however, includes no such image, featuring only two panels of iconic portraits (Fig. 26a). Furthermore, while the cross-heads at Eyam and Bradbourne seem to have been filled with angels (Figs 26a–b, 28, 29), that at Bakewell included at least two non-angelic figures, one of whom carried a book (Figs 24c, 25). Clearly, the iconographic focus of these monuments, while having so much in common, used distinct means to convey their symbolic significance(s).

What is of note here is the manner in which the cross-heads of at least two of the monuments were filled with angelic figures. Elsewhere in the extant corpus of pre-Scandinavian sculpture this type of figure tends to be displayed on the shaft of the monument where angels feature as part of group images.[10] Even where they were depicted in cross-heads they form part of group schemes.[11] Only on the crosses of the Peak District are the angels crowded into the cross-heads as

[10] See Otley (Yorkshire), Halton (Lancashire), the Cross of St Oran, Iona, and the Kildalton Cross, Islay, in Collingwood, *Northumbrian Crosses*, fig. 52 (Otley) and fig. 92b (Halton); Jane Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins: Iconic Images of the Virgin and Child in Insular Sculpture', in *Studies in the Cult of Saint Columba*, ed. by Cormac Bourke (Dublin, 1997), pp. 107–35, figs 4–5 (Iona and Kildalton). For discussion, see Tom Pickles, 'The Church in Anglo-Saxon Yorkshire: Minsters in the Danelaw, *c.* 600–1200' (unpublished doctoral dissertaion, Oxford, 2006). I am grateful to him for the opportunity to discuss these issues. See also Ian Wood, 'Anglo-Saxon Otley: An Archiepiscopal Estate and its Crosses in a Northumbrian Context', *Northern History*, 23 (1987), 20–38.

[11] See Dewsbury, Yorkshire (Pickles, 'Church in Anglo-Saxon Yorkshire', and Collingwood, *Northumbrian Crosses*, fig. 73b), and St Martin's Cross, Iona (Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins', fig. 3, and discussion in Jane Hawkes, 'Figuring Salvation: An Excursus into the Iconography of the Iona Crosses', in *Able Minds*, ed. by Foster and Cross, pp. 259–75).

individual figures, while being absent from the panels of iconic portraits that fill the shafts.[12] This distinctive setting and focus on the angelic suggests that, despite the deplorable condition of much of the figural carving set in the shafts of these monuments (making clear identification of much of the subject matter impossible), they can, nevertheless, provide some insight into the potential iconographic function of the crosses.

Angelic Significances

As has been discussed elsewhere, interest in angels, their various roles, functions, and relationship with humanity, was widespread in the literature of early Christian Britain and Ireland where they make frequent appearances, not just as protagonists (messengers and psychopomps) in hagiographic and visionary texts,[13] but also as subjects accorded substantial consideration in liturgical and exegetical contexts.[14] In Anglo-Saxon England of the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries much

[12] Although worn, the remains of the figures on the shafts at Bakewell and Bradbourne are sufficient to indicate they were not winged.

[13] See Adamnán's *Life of Columba*, iii.23, in *Life of St Columba, Founder of Hy*, ed. by William Reeves (Edinburgh, 1874), pp. 210, 225–29; the anonymous *Life of Cuthbert* [hereafter *VCA*], and that by Bede [hereafter *VCP*], in *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert*, ed. and trans. by Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge, 1940): *VCA*, 1.4, pp. 66–69; 2.2, pp. 76–79; 2.7, pp. 72–73; 2.11, pp. 128–29; *VCP*, 2, p. 47; 7, pp. 53–54; Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* [hereafter *HE*], in *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. by Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), 3.8, pp. 238–39; 4.3, pp. 344–45; 4.11, pp. 366–67; 4.23, pp. 412–13; 5.12, pp. 488–89; 5.19, pp. 526–27; and Æthelwulf's *De abbatibus*, ed. by Alistair Campbell (Oxford, 1967), lines 85–86, pp. 24–25.

[14] The primary exegetical works on the subject were those by Gregory the Great: his *Moralia in Job* [hereafter *Moralia*], ed. by M. Adriaen, 3 vols, CCSL 143–143B (Turnholt, 1979–85); his Homilies on Ezekiel [hereafter *H.Ez.*] and Luke (in *Homiliae in Hiezechielem prophetam*, ed. by M. Adriaen, CCSL, 142 (Turnholt, 1971) and *Homiliae in Evangelia*, ed. by R. Étaix, CCSL, 141 (Turnholt, 1999)), which featured as part of the Christmas office in the West by the ninth century (U. Nilgen, 'The Epiphany and the Eucharist: on the Interpretation of Eucharistic Motifs in Medieval Epiphany Scenes', *Art B.,* 49 (1967), 311–16); his *Dialogues* (hereafter *Dialog.*; *Grégoire le Grand: Dialogues*, ed. by A. de Vogüé and P. Antin (Paris, 1980)); and his *Pastoral Care* (hereafter *Past. Care*; *PL*, 77, 13–128). These formed the basis of subsequent Anglo-Saxon discussions of angels, most notably those of Bede: in his *HE* and Commentaries on the Tabernacle and the Temple (hereafter *De tab.* and *De temp.*; in Bede, *De tabernaculo, De templo, In Ezram et Neemiam*, ed. by David Hurst, CCSL, 119A (Turnholt, 1969)). But see also the early eighth-century anonymous Whitby *Life of Gregory* (hereafter *V. Greg.*; in *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, ed. by Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge, 1968)). For the circulation of these texts

of this focus concerned the manner in which angels functioned as figures of contemplation in fellowship with humanity, a fellowship founded on the sharing of free will: for, 'the angelic nature [. . .] received free will at its creation, whether it wished to persevere in humility and remain within the presence of Almighty God, or yield to pride and fall from blessedness'.[15] Thus, while angels were regarded as heavenly creatures, they were also considered to be, like men, the 'fellow-servants' of God. This was deemed to be a truth revealed to John in his vision of the second incarnation (Revelation 19. 10), and was regarded as obliging humanity to 'be worthy of their [the angels'] respect and fellowship'.[16]

At one level, awareness of this fellowship is reflected liturgically, in the understanding that angels were the colleagues of men in prayer. Bede's comments on angels and the divine services make this clear,[17] as does his belief that angels were present at the canonical hours.[18] As Gregory had put it:

and their influences in Anglo-Saxon England, see Michael Lapidge, 'Surviving Booklists from Anglo-Saxon England', in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of his Sixty-fifth Birthday*, ed. by Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 33–90; Lapidge, *Anglo-Latin Literature 600–899* (London, 1996); Helmut Gneuss, *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Tempe, 2001); and general discussions in Paul Meyvaert, *Bede and Gregory the Great* (Jarrow Lecture, 1964); Alan Thacker, 'Bede's Ideal of Reform', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. by Patrick Wormald, Donald Bullough, and Roger Collins (Oxford, 1983), pp. 130–53 (pp. 130–35); Thacker, 'Monks, Preaching and Pastoral Care in Early Anglo-Saxon England', in *Pastoral Care Before the Parish*, ed. by John Blair and Richard Sharpe (Leicester, 1992), pp. 137–70 (pp. 152–60); Thacker, 'Memorializing Gregory the Great: The Origin and Transmission of a Papal Cult in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries', *Early Medieval Europe*, 7 (1998), 59–84; Henry Mayr-Harting, *Perceptions of Angels in History* (Oxford, 1998); and Hawkes, 'Figuring Salvation'. For a summary of liturgical contexts, see Richard N. Bailey, *Anglo-Saxon Sculptures at Deerhurst* (Deerhurst, 2005), pp. 11–14.

[15] Gregory, *H.Ez.*, I.vii.18, p. 94; trans. by Theodosia Gray, *The Homilies of Saint Gregory the Great on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* (Etna, CA, 1990), p. 74; see also Hawkes, 'Figuring Salvation'.

[16] *Hom. VIII*, ed. by Étaix, p. 56; see also Bede, *De temp.*, I.14.3, p. 185; *VCA*, 1.4, pp. 66–69; 2.2, pp. 76–79; 4.11, pp. 128–29; *VCP*, 2, p. 47; 7, pp. 53–54; and discussion in Mayr-Harting, *Perceptions of Angels in History*, p. 11.

[17] *Homeliarum Evangelii*, 2.10 *'Post Pascha'* (Luc. 24. 1–9), ed. by David Hurst, CCSL, 122 (Turnhout, 1955), pp. 246–52 (pp. 248–49).

[18] Recorded by Alcuin, 'Letter to the Brethren of the Church of St Peter', in *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. III, ed. by Arthur W. Haddan and William Stubbs (Oxford, 1871), pp. 470–71; see also Wood, 'Anglo-Saxon Otley', p. 31.

> Quis enim fidelium habere dubium possit ipsa immolationis hora ad sacerdotis vocem caelos aperiri, in illo Iesu Christi mysterio angelorum chorus adesse, summis ima sociari, terram caelestibus iungi, unum quid ex visibilibus atque invisibilibus fieri.
>
> [Which of the faithful can have any doubt that at the moment of the immolation, at the voice of the priest, the heavens are opened; that in that mystery of Jesus Christ, the choirs of angels are present, the lowest are bound to the highest, the earthly are joined with the heavenly, and out of the visible and the invisible a union is created.][19]

Indeed, it is no coincidence that almost every prayer in the Common of the Mass is an angelic prayer, the *Gloria* being composed around angelic praise at the Nativity, the *Sanctus* echoing the seraphic praise of the heavenly vision of Isaiah, and the *Agnus Dei* recalling the angelic adulation of the Lamb of the Apocalypse; all were prayers that had been established in the Mass by the eighth century. More generally, the whole mode of antiphonal singing was deemed to have derived from angelic worship in heaven,[20] and regardless of John the Deacon's infamous reservations concerning the quality of such choral practices north of the Alps in the ninth century — considering them to be 'unmodulated sounds like unto farm carts clumsily creaking up a rutted hill'[21] — it is clear that such liturgical practices were current in Anglo-Saxon England from the seventh century onwards.[22]

So intimate was the link between the angelic and the human reflected in such liturgical considerations that discussion of angels, particularly in the works of Gregory, tend to move seamlessly between the heavenly and human conditions. Thus, when discussing the disposition of angels in relation to the heavens in his Homilies on Ezekiel, Gregory considers them to be essentially 'stretched upward':

> Facies et pennae extentae desuper describuntur, quia omnis intentio omnisque contemplatio Sanctorum super se tendit, ut illud possit adipisci quod in caelestibus appetit. Siue enim bono operi, siue vero invigilet contemplationi, tunc veraciter hoc quod agit bonum est, quando ei complacre concupiscit a quo est.

[19] *Dialog.* 4.60, p. 202; trans. by Odo J. Zimmermann, *Saint Gregory the Great: Dialogues* (New York, 1959), pp. 273–74; see Mayr-Harting, *Perceptions of Angels in History*, p. 25.

[20] Mayr-Harting, *Perceptions of Angels in History*, p. 14.

[21] *Vita Gregorii Magni*, 2.7 (hereafter *V. Greg. Mag.*; *PL*, 75, 59–242 (col. 91)); Meyvaert, *Bede and Gregory*, p. 8.

[22] See Bede, *Vita beatorum abbatum*, i.6, in *Venerabilis Baedae: opera historica*, ed. by Charles Plummer, 2 vols (Oxford, 1896), II, 369; *HE*, 4.18, 5.20, pp. 388–91; 530–31; *Alcuin: The Bishops, Kings and Saints of York*, ed. by Peter Godman (Oxford, 1982), pp. 98–100; and Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *The City of Rome and the World of Bede* (Jarrow Lecture, 1994).

> [because the whole attention, the entire contemplation of the holy creatures, is directed above themselves in order that it may attain that which it seeks in the heavens. For whether he be watchful in good works, or in true contemplation, then truly that which he does is good when he desires to please him from whom he came.][23]

Here, the heavenly and angelic is indistinguishable from the human, but more significantly, the unity between the two is deemed by Gregory to lie in the shared activity of contemplating the divine. For, it is 'through the grace of contemplation' that angels and men 'yearn to taste eternal blessedness'.[24] It was a process that involved awakening 'the perception of the mind by understanding which is moved from within'.[25] It was thus that contemplation, by men and angels, enabled 'the spirit [. . .] to fix its eyes of faith on the single light of the Creator, because the God who created all things brings to life'. While angels, 'in gazing always on the Unchangeable are changed into immutability', humanity could

> [Ponamus] ante oculos mentis quae illa natura sit quae tenet omnia, implet omnia, circumplectitur omnia, superexcedit omnia, sustinet omnia [. . .]. Huius naturae potentiam cum strictus in ea cogitat animus [. . .] quia eius intellectum concipit, qui et angelorum sensum sua incomprehensibilitate transcendit.
>
> [place before the eyes of our minds that nature which holds all things, fills all things, encompasses all things, surpasses all things, sustains all things [. . .]. For when the spirit, intent on these things, ponders the power of this nature [. . .] the spirit receives an understanding thereof, which in its incomprehensibility transcends even the perceptions of the angels.][26]

However, while the shared act of contemplation demonstrated the link between angels and humans, and facilitated their necessary understanding of the transcendent, it was also a process regarded as crucial in integrating the inner life with the active. More specifically, it was deemed to be a critical element in the pastoral life of the priesthood.[27] In his *Moralia* Gregory makes it clear that 'by contemplation we rise to the love of God; by preaching we return to the service

[23] *H.Ez.*, I.iv.4, p. 49, trans. by Gray, *Homilies*, p. 42.

[24] *H.Ez.*, I.iv.4, p. 50, trans. by Gray, *Homilies*, p. 43.

[25] *H.Ez.*, I.viii.12, p. 107, trans. by Gray, *Homilies*, p. 83.

[26] *H.Ez.*, I.viii.15–16, pp. 108–09, trans. by Gray, *Homilies*, p. 84.

[27] See discussions in Robert A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 21–47; Thacker, 'Bede's Ideal', pp. 131–49; Thacker, 'Monks', pp. 152–53; Jennifer O'Reilly, 'Introduction', to *Bede: On the Temple*, trans. by Seán Connolly (Liverpool, 1995), pp. xvii–lv (pp. xxvi–xli).

of our neighbour'.[28] But, in order to avoid 'prioritizing' the contemplative over the active in the pastoral ministry, he also made it clear that

> Mira enim divinitatis pietate agitur, cum is qui perfecto corde ad contemplationem tenditur, humanis ministeriis occupatur; ut et multis infirmioribus eius mens perfecta proficiat et quo se ipse imperfectum respicit, inde ad humilitatis culmen perfectior assurgat.
>
> [It is by a wonderful divine benevolence that he who seeks contemplation with a perfect heart is occupied in serving others; so that his perfected mind may profit others weaker than him, and that he himself may rise to the summit of perfection in humility from the very imperfection he perceives in himself.][29]

For Bede, steeped in these ideals, the two were inextricably linked; as Thacker has pointed out, 'it seems never to have occurred to Bede to question the involvement of [the contemplative] in missionary and pastoral activity'.[30] Thus, just as the purpose of 'holy teachers' lay in 'being raised to supernal things they were also just as firm in their capacity of lifting others up to the love of supernal things by their teaching'.[31]

Thus angels were regarded as creatures that could be identified with both the heavenly and the human. With humanity they shared free will and contemplation of the Divine, and for humanity, while such contemplation was necessary if spiritual understanding was to be achieved, it was also a crucial aspect of the pastoral role of those serving the Church. In fact, contemplation was what made the Church of the Christian community 'as like to the angels'.[32]

Against the background of this complex of ideas it is not impossible that the apparent focus on the angelic, evidenced by the concentration of these figures in the cross-heads of the Derbyshire monuments, implies some reference to the ideas surrounding angels, to their fellowship with humanity, their role as figures of contemplation (the aim of which was to achieve understanding of the nature of the divine), and the importance of contemplation in the pastoral life of the Church.

[28] *Moralia*, VI.xxxvii.56, p. 326; see also *Moralia*, XXXI.xxv.49; *H.Ez.*, I.iii.9; and the discussion in Markus, *Gregory*, p. 23.

[29] *Moralia*, V.iv.5, p. 222; see also *H.Ez.*, II.ii.11; *H.Ez.*, II.vi.5; and stronger admonition in *Past. Care*, 1.5; with discussion in Markus, *Gregory*, pp. 24–25.

[30] Thacker, 'Monks', p. 153.

[31] *De tab.*, 2.9, p. 74; trans. by Arthur G. Holder, *Bede: On the Tabernacle* (Liverpool, 1994), p. 83; see also *De tab.*, 2.13, p. 86.

[32] *H.Ez.*, I.viii.6, p. 105; trans. by Gray, *Homilies*, p. 81.

Angelic Sculptures

As far as the cross at Eyam is concerned (Fig. 26), the figural panels associated with the angelic scheme depict the remains of the Virgin and Child at the truncated top of the shaft and, below, a prophet with an unfurled scroll.[33] Of these, the Virgin and Child panel functions, as do all such images, to signify the humanity of the Christ Child at the incarnation while the hierarchic attitude of the mother and child, and the manner in which the Child raises one hand in blessing, serve as signifiers of his inherent majesty and divinity. In early Christian images this aspect of Christ's nature is usually emphasized by the inclusion of attendant angels (with staffs).[34] Thus, while angels are not included within the same panel as the Virgin and Child at Eyam, the way they are crowded (holding floriated rods) into the cross-head above means that they can be regarded as indicators of the divinity of the godhead at the first incarnation. In this context the prophet set below the Virgin and Child serves, in keeping with such depictions in early Christian art, to underline the manner in which this incarnation was regarded as fulfilling God's plan for salvation foretold in the Old Testament.[35] Overall, therefore, the iconographic programme reveals the salvation of humanity as foretold by the prophets, confirmed in the incarnation of the Christ Child, and celebrated by the angelic host, signifiers of his divinity. Being concentrated in the cross-head, however, the angels also serve as reminders of the most appropriate manner in which such issues are to be regarded; they remind the viewer of the shared obligation of contemplation, leading the mind upwards in understanding of the divine. The angels blowing trumpets on the other side of the cross-head further complement these themes by providing clear references to the judgement of the Second Coming,[36] while their

[33] The scroll (signifying the words of his prophecy concerning the future coming of the Messiah) is represented by the unusual curved feature held across the body of the prophet, which twists to a point at one end.

[34] See the sixth-century icon at Mt Sinai (Gertrude Schiller, *Ikonographie der Christlichen Kunst*, vol. IV.2 (Gutersloh, 1980), pl. 414), the seventh-century icon at Sta Maria in Trastevere, Rome (*Europe in the Dark Ages*, ed. by Jean Hubert, Jean Porcher, and Wolfgang F. Volbach (New York, 1969), fig. 128), and the mid-eighth-century Iona carvings (Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins', figs 3–5).

[35] Gertrude Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, vol. I, trans. by Janet Seligman (London, 1971), pp. 13–15.

[36] It is possible that the cross-head was reset the wrong way round on the truncated top of the shaft in the later eighteenth century — that originally, the angels with the trumpets were intended to be viewed in conjunction with the Virgin and Child and prophet. If so, these angels would still

association with the plant-scroll below links the Church and its sacraments with the process of incarnation, salvation, judgement, and resurrection (Fig. 26b).[37]

Here, it is also worth noting that the manner in which the figural decoration is organized across the monument emphasizes the single male figure set in the company of angels on the narrow end of the northern cross-arm (Fig. 26d). Whether he was intended to depict a specific individual (such as a prophet, apostle, or saint), if the angels are understood as figures of contemplation associating humanity with the heavenly, this figure serves dramatically to associate the human viewer standing below, being 'stretched upwards' in contemplation, with the angelic company of heaven. Overall, the iconographic scheme, through its focus on the angelic, emphasizes the act of contemplation, crucial at the level of each individual viewer, but also for the institution of the Church and those serving within it. The angels mediate understanding of the promise of salvation made possible by the incarnation (foretold by the prophets) and perpetually re-enacted in the regular celebration of the Eucharist in Christ's Church on Earth, and which will be fulfilled at the Second Coming.

At Bradbourne, although much of the figural decoration of the monument is damaged beyond identification, it is likely that the angelic figures of the cross-head fragments were originally associated with the Crucifixion and the archers set within the plant-scrolls on the shaft (Figs 27, 28, 29). In this context it is likely that, as Barbara Raw has argued, the archers can be regarded (through the exegetical tradition initially articulated by Augustine and Hilary of Poitiers), as symbolic of the preacher, his arrows being the word of God shot to arouse the love of humanity.[38] The references to sacrament and salvation expressed iconographically at Eyam are thus also articulated at Bradbourne, albeit through the invocation of a different set of signifiers.

present an iconographically coherent programme, serving as reminders of the second incarnation, a theme often invoked in discussions of the first incarnation.

[37] See E. S. Greenhill, 'The Child in the Tree', *Traditio*, 10 (1954), 323–71; Jennifer O'Reilly, *Studies in the Iconography of the Virtues and Vices in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1988), pp. 344–48; O'Reilly, 'The Trees of Eden in Medieval Iconography', in *A Walk in the Garden: Biblical, Iconographical and Literary Images of Eden*, ed. by Paul Morris and David Sawyer (Sheffield, 1992), pp. 167–204; Jane Hawkes, 'The Plant-Life of Early Christian Anglo-Saxon Art', in *From Earth to Art: The Many Aspects of the Plant-World in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Carol Biggam (Amsterdam, 2002), pp. 257–80; and Hawkes, *The Sandbach Crosses: Sign and Significance in Anglo-Saxon Sculpture* (Dublin, 2002), pp. 90–93.

[38] Barbara Raw, 'The Archer, the Eagle and the Lamb', *JWCI*, 30 (1967), 391–94. This aspect will be discussed further in the forthcoming Corpus volume (see note 1 above).

Two other figural panels, however, also survive on the shaft in sufficient detail for their function within the iconographic programme to be considered (Fig. 30). These are the panels preserved at the base of the current north face of the shaft, directly opposite the Crucifixion on the south face (Fig. 27b, d). The uppermost of these portrays two clerical figures wearing *pallia* and grasping books; that below depicts a central clerical figure holding before him a book over T-shaped stand. Perched on his right shoulder is a bird while over his left is a rectangular object; below, he is flanked by two diminutive profile figures facing each other, both apparently with books before them. These distinctive features and their overall arrangement indicate that this lowermost image can be identified as Gregory the Great in his role as Scribe. Portraits of Gregory as Pope survive from an early date,[39] but during the ninth century an iconographic scheme emerged that depicted him writing and in the company of fellow scribes (who vary in number between one and three).[40] It is in this iconographic context that Gregory is associated with the bird,[41] and sometimes with an open manuscript in the upper confines of the surrounding frame — a detail that suggests the identity of the rectangular object set over the left shoulder of the Bradbourne figure.[42]

[39] *V. Greg. Mag.*, 4.83, cols 229–30; see the discussion in Meyvaert, *Bede and Gregory*. For early extant examples of Gregory as Pope, see the historiated initial in the mid-eighth-century copy of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* (St Petersburg, Russian National Library, Cod. Q. v. I. 18, fol. 26^{v} in Jonathan J. G. Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts, 6th to the 9th Century*, Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles, 1 (London, 1978), fig. 84); the miniature in the eighth-century collection of Gregory's Homilies (Vercelli, Archiv. Capitolare, MS CXLVIII, fol. 9^{r}, in the Princeton Index, 32/V582/AvCrs/5,9A); the miniature in the ninth-century gospel book of S. Gereon (Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, fol. 3^{v}, in the Princeton Index, 32/S93/LLa/6,3B); and the ivory diptych panel dated variously to the sixth and ninth centuries at Monza (Wolfgang Braunfels, *Die Welt der Karolinger und ihre Kunst* (Munich, 1968), fig. 213).

[40] See, for example, the ninth-century ivory preserved at Vienna (A. Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der zeit der Karolingischen und Sächsischen Kaiser: VIII–XI Jahrhundert* (Berlin, repr. 1969), Taf. LIV.122), and the miniature in a tenth-century missal (Halberstadt, Domgymnasium, MS 153, fol. 13^{r}, in the Princeton Index, 32/H129/LD/4,13A).

[41] John the Deacon's later ninth-century version of Gregory's *Life* explains that all images of Gregory portray him with the dove, but his account of the portrait then hanging in Gregory's monastery of St Andrew makes no mention of the motif (*V. Greg. Mag.*, 4.83, cols 229–30). Certainly extant manuscript images of the full-length standing figure of Gregory as Pope, produced between the eighth and eleventh centuries, do not include it (see above, note 39, and the discussion in *Earliest Life*, ed. by Colgrave, n. 110, and Meyvaert, *Bede and Gregory*, n. 17).

[42] See the miniature in the tenth-century copy of Gregory's Homilies on Ezekiel, Einseiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 156, p. 11 (Princeton Index, 32/Ei67/LSts/11,2).

Figure 30. Bradbourne, Derbyshire: detail of north face of cross-shaft. Clerical figures and Gregory as Scribe. Photo: Jane Hawkes.

While the scribal image of Gregory is commonly associated with Carolingian developments, being most famously depicted in the ninth-century ivory preserved at Vienna,[43] the association of his scribal activities with the dove of the Holy Spirit inspiring his work (on Ezekiel) has an earlier, eighth-century Anglo-Saxon literary source, being preserved in the Whitby *Life of Gregory*.[44] Here it is explained that

> Unde de ordinibus illorum, scilicet agminum tali tractavit ingenio, quali nequaquam sanctorum aliquis vel ante vel post eum invenimus fecisse alterum [. . .]. Hic vero eos non solum in suis distinxit agminibus, omnia ex sanctis confirmando scripturis, verum etiam ad nostrę consortia vitę, mundo corde quo beati tantum Deum videbunt, dirivavit. Iste igitur ille de quo ait Salvator, 'Omnis scriba doctus in regno cę lorum similes est homini patrifamilias, qui profert de thesauro suo nova et vetera.'
>
> [Gregory dealt with the orders of the angelic ranks with such skill as we have never been able to find in any other saint before or since [. . .]. Not only did Gregory divide them into orders, basing everything on the Holy Scriptures, but also, with that pure heart whereby the blessed alone shall see God, he even brought them into fellowship with this life of ours. It is he therefore of whom the Saviour says, 'Every scribe which is instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is an householder which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.'][45]

So laudable were his scribal skills, 'it is said that a certain member of Gregory's household [. . .] saw a white dove resting upon the man of God while he was engaged in writing these homilies on Ezekiel' — just as the dove of the Holy Spirit descended on Christ at his baptism.[46] The existence, preservation, and transmission of this event in an Anglo-Saxon context may go some way to explaining the depiction of Gregory preserved at Bradbourne, particularly as copies of the Whitby life seem to have been circulating in Mercia from the eighth century,[47] while the iconographic scheme itself is constructed within the long-established aulic tradition of the hieratic central figure surrounded by diminutive subsidiary figures, an iconographic tradition that was used elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon England, and indeed in Mercian art in the eighth century, to create scenes such as David Dictating the Psalms.[48]

[43] See above, note 40.

[44] I am grateful to Jennifer O'Reilly for her advice on this subject.

[45] *V. Greg. 25*, pp. 118–21.

[46] *V. Greg. 25*, pp. 120–23.

[47] See the discussion in *Earliest Life*, ed. by Colgrave, n. 99, n. 120; and Thacker, 'Memorializing Gregory'.

[48] Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, fig. 146; *The Vespasian Psalter: British Museum, Cotton Vespasian A.I*, ed. by David Wright (Copenhagen, 1967), pp. 71–72.

More significant, perhaps, in elucidating the potential iconographic significance of the overall programme once depicted at Bradbourne is the literary context of Gregory's scribal activities. In the Whitby life these are inserted into an account of his homiletic elucidation of Ezekiel's vision. This summarizes, not the entire collection of homilies, but rather the eighth homily of the first book: the homily most concerned with angelic nature, with the fellowship of angels and humanity, with the nature of contemplation and its function in the Christian life.[49] This is not to imply that the iconographic programme at Bradbourne is a visual commentary inspired by the *Life of Gregory*. It does, however, suggest that relevant to those responsible for this monument were the ideas propounded by Gregory concerning angels, their importance as figures of contemplation, and the role of contemplation in the pastoral life. The inclusion of Gregory as Scribe and the pairing of clerical figures in the panel implies that the importance he placed on the act of contemplation within the active pastoral life of the Church was intentionally being made explicit in the iconographic programme of the cross at Bradbourne.

Conclusions

Set in the heads of the Peak District crosses, the angelic figures can thus be understood to have acted as mnemonics inviting the viewer to consider the link between men and angels and their shared obligation of rightful contemplation of the godhead, such contemplation being a necessary precondition of proper understanding and the exercise of right action — particularly for the priesthood of the Church. The iconographic expression of these ideas indicates that, like their more well-known Northumbrian counterparts, these figural monuments were the products of a culturally and theologically sophisticated ecclesiastical milieu that wished to present themes expressly concerned with the Church and its pastoral role in the Christian community, themes that were perhaps intellectually esoteric, but which were nevertheless being given public expression in the form of sculptural stone monuments. By concentrating the setting of the visually arresting angels in the cross-heads of these monuments, the designers seem to have been concerned, on the one hand, to encourage the active participation of each viewer in that most central of processes (contemplation of the divine), while at the same time, to define their ecclesiastical role as one that integrated the contemplative with the active and the pastoral.

[49] See above, notes 25, 26, and 32.